

THE *BHAKTI* THEOLOGY OF THE DĀDŪPANTHĪ SUNDARĀS *

Several authors have pointed to the fact that by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the North Indian Sant movements exhibit a re-orientation to orthodox Vaiṣṇavism. In principle two factors responsible for this development have been emphasized in the specialist literature, one is religio-psychological, the other socio-historically relevant as it is concerned with the antagonistic relationship the Sants had with orthodox groups. P. R. Caturvedi¹ draws attention to the *saguṇa* traits in *nirguṇa bhakti* and ascribes the incorporation of *saguṇa* elements into those cults to the *bhakta*'s need of self-expression and of having an object of his *anubhava*, his religious experience, in spite of subscribing to a *nirguṇa* ontology. Ch. Vaudeville² points to the fact that, « ... half-Hindu sects tried to assert the links they claimed with the "four [Vaiṣṇava] saṁpradāyas" in an apparent search for Brāhmanical respectability through a firm commitment to the great Vedāntic tradition ».

Given this strong leaning toward orthodox *saguṇa* Vaiṣṇava practice, which clearly exists as a *fait accompli* in the present-day Sant sects, it seems worth-while to investigate what early Sant theology contributes to this problem, that is to say, the little theology that was produced during the initial phases of the various movements concerned. One rare extant example of a theological oeuvre is on deposit in the Dādūpanth, named after Dādū (ca. 1554-1604 A.D.), a poet-saint who lived most of his life in the area around Jaipur. The sect, famous for its rich literary activity and the preservation of many *bhakti* and *yoga* works by non-Dādūpanthī authors, has its strongholds in Rajasthan, Haryana, the Panjab, and moreover is spread over the whole of North India³. Nowa-

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1. *Hindī sāhitya kā br̥hat itihās*, bhāg 5, Vārāṇasi, V.S. 2025: 7 ff.

2. *Kabīr*, vol. I, Oxford, 1974: 114.

3. On Dādū and the Dādūpanth see W. G. ORR, *A sixteenth-century Indian mystic*, London and Redhill, 1947.

days the Dādūpanth exhibit quite orthodox traits: they accept only members of the three upper *varṇas* in their fold, style their founder Dādū an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, in addition the way they revere the *bānī*, the words of Dādū reduced to writing, bears traits unmistakably borrowed from *sagūṇa* ritual. Another feature also normally enumerated among orthodox Vaiṣṇava characteristics, is their strict vegetarianism, which, however, already Dādū pleaded for⁴. In the case of the Dādūpanth, we are in a position to trace back the beginning of the « Vaiṣṇavization » to the generation of the immediate disciples of Dādū. Literary sources give fairly good information on the first generation of the sect, and also informative is the voluminous and substantial theological oeuvre of Sundardās (V.S. 1653?-1746?), the erudite poet-scholar praised in the history of Hindi literature mainly for his *savaiyās*, although in spite of that praise he remains rather neglected. His preserved works amount to about a thousand printed pages⁵ and are mostly written in a highly polished, very often sanskritized, Braj. Sundar, an immediate disciple of Dādū, spent twenty-one years in Benares to study the orthodox literature, and his works in fact do show a remarkable sophistication in classical as well as in contemporary learning. The fact that the early Dādūpanth, shortly after Dādū's death, saw to it that Sundar was given such an elaborate training betrays the sect's endeavour to establish links identifying it with the orthodox tradition. Sundar, according to Dādūpanthī sources, was a Vaiśya by caste. Being thus privileged by hailing from a decent caste and commanding the achievements of orthodox learning, he was probably not so much personally involved in the struggle of the average Sants to gain orthodox recognition. His writings, besides revealing his fine poetical talent and religious fervour, show him to being nothing less than a theologian very sure of himself and the tenet he stands for. So this scion of the Dādūpanth is socially a rather untypical Sant, and this must be borne in mind when evaluating his writings, although for the time being I feel unable to assess the impact of this special position in a consistent and precise manner.

The sum of Sundar's theological thinking is contained in a work called the *Jñānsamudra* (abbr. *JS*), finished in V.S. 1710, that is, fifty years after Dādū's death. The present paper is based mainly on the second chapter of this work. The *jñāna* Sundar expounds in the *JS* is that culminating in final liberation. The means to this end are the practice of *bhaktiyoga*, *haṭhayoga*, and *sāṃkhyayoga* which lead on to the attainment of the *advaitic* union of the soul and God. That is, Sundar adheres to the long-established scheme of the threefold *yoga*. The *JS*

4. To judge from the *sākhīs*, couplets, attributed to him which testify to it.

5. Edited by Purohit Hari Nārāyaṇ Sarmā under the title *Sundar-granthāvalī*, khaṇḍ 1-2, Kalkattā, [V.S.] 1993; the text studied in this paper, the *Jñānsamudra* (*JS*), comprises pp. 1-83 (pagination of the text part). The translation of *JS* 2 will be found in my book, *Crossing the ocean of existence. Braj religious poetry from Rajasthan. A Reader*, Wiesbaden, 1983: 128-139.

falls into five chapters; the initial one deals with the characteristics of the *guru* and the *śiṣya*, then follow the four chapters on *bhakti*- (chapter 2), *haṭha*- (chapter 3), *sāṃkhyā-yoga* (chapter 4) and *advaita* (chapter 5).

Bhakti, according to Sundar, consists of three successive stages, viz. *navadhā*, *premalakṣaṇā* (= *daśamī*) and *parā bhakti*, the last-mentioned one being characterized by the state of non-difference which the devotee (*sevakā*) and the object of his devotion (*sevyā*) share⁶. The components of the ninefold *bhakti* (*navadhā*-) are *śravaṇa* « listening », *kīrtana* « praise », *samarana* « remembrance », *pādasevana* « serving [the Lord's] feet », *arcana* « worship », *dāsabhāva* « the *bhāva* of [being God's] servant », and *samarpana* « self-sacrifice » or « surrender »⁷, the last-mentioned also called *ātmā arpana*⁸. This list of *bhakti*-constituents is identical with that given in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*⁹. The nine items of *bhakti* are also called *bhaktisādhana* or *sādhana* in the *Adhyātmamāyāṇa*¹⁰ and with the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas¹¹. In the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* passages dealing with the ninefold *bhakti* the term *sādhana* is not used, at least it does not occur as a technical term¹². All texts correspond in conceiving the ninefold *bhakti* as instrumental to the achievement of the higher stages of devotional perfection the *sādhaka*, the devotee in quest of perfection, strives for physically and mentally. It prepares him for the gradual attainment of that perfection which consists in the nearness to or identity with God.

In the beginning of the discussion of the ninefold *bhakti*, Sundar raises the problem of the relation between the *nirguṇa* and the *saguṇa* aspects of the Supreme Self (JS 2, 11-12):

*Disciple, I will tell you what is Vedic lore,
All devotees have borne witness to it.
One knows the Supreme Self by two forms,
That is, one distinguishes between an attributeless Supreme Self
and one with attributes.*

*The attributeless is the proper form, the absolute,
While that with attributes is the incarnation of the saint.
Devotion to the attributeless is effected by the mind,
Devotion to the saints by mind and body*¹³.

6. JS 2, 34.

7. JS 2, 6.

8. JS 2, 34.

9. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* VII, 5, 23-24; for another list of nine constituents of *bhakti* see *ibid.*, XI, 3, 18-33, which is the antecedent of *Adhyātmamāyāṇa* III, 10, 22-30.

10. *Adhyātmamāyāṇa* III, 10, 22.

11. RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ, *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, pass.

12. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* VII, 5, 23-24 and XI, 3, 18-33.

13. *śiṣa tohi kahauṃ śruti vāṇī, saba saṃtani sāṣi baṣāṇī / dvai rūpa brahma ke jānai, nirguṇa aru saguṇa pichānai* (11). *nirguṇa nija rūpa niyārā, puni saguṇa saṃtā avatārā / nirguṇa kī bhakti su mana saṃtā, saṃtāna kī mana aru tana saṃtā* (12).

Right in the beginning of JS 1, Sundar, in a conventional *maṅgalā-caraṇa*, pays obeisance to the *parabrahma*, the *gurudeva* and to all the *sants*¹⁴. What is the relationship among these three discrete entities? Sundar answer in JS 1, 3:

That very brahman, that guru, that sant — a single reality¹⁵ exists in them.

What by a play on words¹⁶ is a trinity of constituents, to this there is obeisance with due discrimination of its nature¹⁷.

As in many other *bhakti*-discussions, the concept of the transpersonal *nirguṇa* reality and the concept of the central importance of the *guru*, or, more generally, the *sant*, the « saintly person », who is necessarily *saguṇa*, have to be reconciled with each other. By means of an orthodox advaitic argumentation Sundar subsumes the *saguṇa* aspects under the *nirguṇa parabrahman*. However, at the same time this same procedure runs on to further implications: expressedly it introduces also the word *avatāra*, and implicitly it favours a latent reintroduction of the items of the *saguṇa upāsana* which will be discussed presently.

14. JS 1, 1a-c: *prathama vaṇḍi parabrahma parama ānaṇḍa svarūpaṇi / dutiya vaṇḍi gurudeva diyau jiha jñāna anūpaṇi // tritya vaṇḍi saba saṁta jori kara tinake āgaya /*.

15. For the term *vastu*, reality, in mystical writings see GOPAL SHANKAR TULPULÉ, *The vastu, or the Reality, of medieval Indian saints*, in « Bhakti in current research, 1979-82 », ed. M. Thiel-Horstmann, Berlin, 1983: 403-411.

16. *Vacana vilāsa*, « elegance of speech, play on words », occurs also in SUNDAR's, *Savaiyās*, chapter 32, 10: *brahma hai ṭhaura kau ṭhaura dūsarau na koṭi aura, bastu kau bicāra kīyeṇ bastu pahicāṇṇiye / paṁcatatva tina guna bistare bibidhi bhāṇṭi, nāma rūpa jahāṇṇi lagai mithyā māṇṇiye // šeṣa nāga ādi dai kai baikuṇṭha goloka puni, bacana vilāsa saba bheda bhrama bhāṇṇiye / na tau koṭi urajhyau na surajhyau kahau su kauṇa, suṇḍara sakala yaha uvābāi jāṇṇiye*. Probably there are more instances of occurrence of the expression *vacana vilāsa* in Sundar's works, but they have escaped my attention. In the last-quoted passage *vacana vilāsa* refers again to the rise and diversification of the world due to the dilimitating adjuncts which conceal the unity of the *vastu* which is *brahman*. In advaitic discussions the word *vācārambhana* occurs in very many places in quite the same context as *vacana vilāsa* does with Sundar, cf. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* I, 6, 4-6, referred to by Śaṅkara in his *Upadeśasāhasrī* I, 2, 2; I, 16, 35; II, 1, 40. In fact, I, 16, 35, is very close to what Sundar has in mind when writing JS 1, 3. Śaṅkara says *vācārambhanaśāstrāc ca, vikāraṇaṁ hy abhāvata / mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum ityāder, mama māyeti ca smṛteḥ*. « On the authority of the scripture, which says that modifications are a verbal handle, they are indeed unreal, since [the *Śrutis*] say, "Death after death does he attain [who thinks he sees manifoldness in this world]" (Brh. Up. IV, 4, 19), and the *Smṛti* also says, "[For this is...] my miraculous power [which is hard to go beyond]" (BhG VII, 14) » (quoted from the critical edition by Sengaku Mayeda, Tokyo, 1973, and from the same author's translation, *A thousand teachings: the «Upadeśasāhasrī» of Śaṅkara*, Tokyo, 1979). See also Śrīdhara's use of *vācārambhana* when commenting on the word *anuvāda* in *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X, 3, 18: *ya ātmano dṛśyagūṇeṣu sann iti, vyavasyate svavyatirekato 'budhaḥ / vinānuvādaṁ na ca tan manīṣitaṁ, saṁtyag yatas tyaktam upādadaṭ pumān*.

17. JS 1, 3: *uḥai brahma guru saṁta uḥa vastu virājata yeka / vacana vilāsa vibhāga traya vaṇḍana bhāva viveka*.

The first half of JS 2, 12 could pass for the words of any *saguna*-oriented author. It is far removed in spirit from the utterances in which Dādū himself used the word *autāra* (<*avatāra*), doing so in most general terms or even in a deprecatory fashion. With Sundar the *sant*, or, as the most important exemplar of the *sant* type, the *guru*, leads the disciple on the path to liberation. Hence *avatāra* used in connection with *sant* embodies an absolutely positive and affirmative term. In the case of Sundar the *avatāra*-concept does not imply the doctrine of the twenty-four or any other number of Vaiṣṇava *avatāras* but serves rather to relate the *guru* he hypostasizes to the concept of the unity of the *para-brahman*. Dādū, in *Granth kāya belī* 1, 10, says that « [the Real Satguru Rām] ... makes his descent within the body »¹⁸. Sundar however goes a step further: the Innate One actually becomes incarnate. Dādū, as many Sants before him, is not concerned with such manifest incarnations. For him the Real *Guru* is identical with the *agocara anirvacanīya*, seen, if ever, only in the mystical vision.

Sundar is not the only immediate disciple to apply the concept of the *avatāra* incarnate to the *sant* or *guru*. His fellow-disciple Jangopāl does so, too. In his *Dādūjanmatīlāparcī*¹⁹ he says that Dādū, « made his descent »²⁰. The context makes the expression *avatār le-* roughly synonymous with *janam le-*, « to take birth », but Jangopāl also supplies a mild form of *avatāra* aetiology when saying that Dādū « took his body » on the order of the « Eternal Supreme Self » and « that the hope of all living beings were fulfilled » when « Hari who is the reason for [all] *bhakti* » sported²¹. He goes on saying that « the afflicted world became happy at this sight »²². This makes the birth of the *guru*, that is, of Dādū, soteriologically meaningful in calling what would be the *bhārā-vataraṇa* of Sanskrit Vaiṣṇava literature its motive. In short, Jangopāl and Sundar make use of the concept of *avatāra* as it allows for relating the *nirguṇa brahman* to the earthly life of the saint, especially of Dādū. This again allows them to assign soteriological meaning to each event in the master's life which the immediate disciples had shared with him. But at the same time this term *avatāra*, like many more terms that linked the Sants with more orthodox Vaiṣṇava thinking, could serve as a badge for a variety of the more doctrinal kind of Vaiṣṇavism which cherished a full-fledged *avatāra*-theology.

18. I am quoting from the critical edition by Paraśurām Caturvedī, *Dādūdayāl graṁthāvalī*, Vārāṇasī, V.S. 2023: *kāya māṇhaiṁ lai autāra*.

19. Edited by Sukhdayāl Dādū, Jaipur, 1947. This edition is a contaminated one. A critical edition is presently being prepared by W. M. Callewaert. The earliest version of this hagiography of Dādū was probably finished soon after Dādū's death in 1604. The three instances of occurrence of the word *avatāra* are quoted from the printed edition at the risk of not being traceable in the earliest version of that text.

20. *Ibid.*, 1, 10: *hari ke saṁta liyau avatārā*; see also *ibid.*, 1, 32, *svāmī liya avatārā*.

21. *Ibid.*, 1, 7: *bhakti heta hari kiya vilāsā*.

22. *Ibid.*, 1, 8: *duniyā jivī bāpuḍī sukha darasana pāye*.

As for the elements of the *navadhā bhakti*, Sundar, after making the initial distinction of the *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* aspects of God and the resulting twofold distinction of *bhakti*, proceeds to enumerate the nine components in detail. Not every item enumerated displays the *nirguṇa-saguṇa* balance, thus, in the case of *kīrttana*, and in accordance with famous preceding *bhakti*-texts such as the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhāktirasāmṛtasindhu*, there is no « interior » praise contrasted with the « exterior » one. This is, on the other hand, the case with *samarana*, which is the second of the nine constituents²³. Here the twofold distinction is a salient one, because the Sants practise a kind of *nāmsmaraṇ* central to their worship and to the individual spiritual quest which, in its most perfect form, is an *ajapa japa*, « silent prayer », which is identified with the sound of the *anāhata (nāda)*, « the sound unstruck », symbolic of the revelation of and the union with, the Supreme Self. For *pādasevana* again²⁴, Sundar is not very explicit with regard to the twofold distinction, although the expression « fixing one's thoughts on [the foot-lotus] » precludes a mere physical performance of the rite. The most intriguing item, the *arcana*, follows which is described according to its usual Vaiṣṇava constituents. All the items of *arcana* are there²⁵, except for what is normally called *ācamana* or *piṇḍaṃ viśudh-*, that is the preparatory purification the devotee undergoes²⁶. Sundar describes *arcana* in JS 2, 17-21:

*Now listen to the secret of worship, o disciple, I will tell it to you:
Directing your bhāva towards it, devote yourself to it, your mind
attentively fixed on it,*

*Within yourself build up the matchless temple of bhāva, erect a
perfect idol in it,*

*Moreover, the throne of bhāva shall display its splendour. Without
bhāva nothing can be done (17).*

*With his own bhāva the servant shall perform the worship there, he
shall sit facing the idol.*

*Let him take the sacrificial utensils consisting exclusively of his
bhāva to the Eternal Lord.*

*Holding a full jar of bhāva, he shall bathe the idol in the water
that is bhāva.*

*With the garments made of nothing but bhāva he shall adorn its
limbs in various ways from head to foot (18).*

*There, through your bhāva, rub the sandal paste and saffron colour
of bhāva,*

23. JS 2, 15: *aba samarana doi prakārā, ika rasanā nāma ucārā / ika hṛdaya nāma ṭhaharāvai, yaha samarana bhakti kahāvai.*

24. JS 2, 16: *nita carana kamala mahiṇ lauṭai, manasā kari pāva paloṭai / yaha bhakti carana kī sevā, samujhāvata hai gurudevā.*

25. For a list of the items of *arcana* see *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 3, 49-55.

26. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 3, 49.

Adding the perfume of nothing but bhāva, apply the unguent-mark to the Lord's forehead.

Thread matchless garlands of the loveliest flowers that grow of nothing but bhāva.

Dress the Lord, behold Him all over, and offer Him burning incense (19).

There, take food of nothing but bhāva, and offer nothing but bhāva for His meal,

And further, by nothing but bhāva, devote all your religious striving to the Lord.

There, light the lamp of nothing but bhāva, and offer ghī that is bhāva.

There, make a metal plate of your bhāva and set the lamp on it (20).

There, bells and cymbals, conch-shell, gong and drum,

There, with the words of songs of nothing but bhāva multifarious tunes will sound abundantly.

Performing this āratī of nothing but bhāva, bow many times in salutation.

Then your praise shall be uttered in many ways, and many times repeat the Name in tune with the sound of the music (21) ²⁷.

All the items required of the *arcana* are present, but all are produced or performed in an internalized fashion. The spiritual if not the literal model of this kind of internal *arcana*, as far as only Dādūpanthī sources are concerned, will be found in Dādū's following *āratī* song, which is regularly sung as part of the Dādūpanthī liturgy,

(Refrain:) Thus do thou worship Rama: within thine own spirit perform thy devotion.

1. *Let body and mind be the sandal-wood, love the rosary, the inward Voice the temple-gong of the Lord of the humble.*
2. *Let wisdom be the lamp, the vital airs the wick, the object of thy worship Niranjana, the five organs of sense the sacred vessels.*
3. *Offer the service of joy and gladness and loving trust: let the intent of the heart be the temple of the indwelling God.*

27. *aba arcanā kau bheda suni śiṣa deṃ tohi vatāi, aropi kaiṃ tahaṃ bhāva apanaṃ seiye mana lāi / raci bhāva kau maṃdira anūpama akala mūrati māṃhi, puni bhāva śiṅghāsana virājai bhāva binu kachu nāṃhi (17). nija bhāva kī tahaṃ karai pūjā baiṭhi sanamukha dāsa, nija bhāva kī saba sauṃja ānai nitya svāṇmī pāsa / puni bhāva hī kau kalaśa bhari dhari bhāva nira nhavāi, kari bhāva hī basana bahu bidhi aṃga aṃga banāi (18). tahaṃ bhāva caṃdana bhāva keśari bhāva kari ghasi lehu, puni bhāva hī kari caraci svāṇmī tilaka mastaka dehu / lai bhāva hī ke puṣpa uttama guhai māla anūpa, pahirāi prabhu kauṃ niraṣi nakha śiṣa bhāva ṣevai dhūpa (19). tahaṃ bhāva hī lai dharai bhojana bhāva lāvai bhoga, puni bhāva hī kari kaiṃ samarpai sakala prabhu kai yoga / tahaṃ bhāva hī kau joi dipaka bhāva ghṛta kari śiṃci, tahaṃ bhāva hī kī karai thāli dharai tā ke bici (20). tahaṃ bhāva atisai raṃga / yaha bhāva hī kī āratī kari karai bahuṭa pranāma, taba stuti bahu bidhi uccarai dhuni sahita lai lai nāma (21).*

4. *I dedicate myself in continual devotion. Dadu knows not how to worship Thee aright* ^{27a}.

Sundar elaborates this concept of the internal *arcana* by bringing into focus the aspect of *bhāva*. The whole *arcana* is executed solely through *bhāva*. The term *bhāva*, in connection with *bhakti*, is a household word of *bhakti* literature and also frequently used by Dādū. It is normally translated by « love, emotion » when occurring in connection with *bhakti*, as it does in many places as for example in the phrase « I will perform *bhāva bhakti*, the *rasa* of *prema* shall be drunk with love (*prīti*) » ²⁸. In one *pada* Dādū uses the word *bhāva* in a more specialized sense:

This way, o monk, you shall enjoy in Rām that nothing different from the self can be thought of. (Refrain)

As one looks at one's own self, that way one has to see [all] creatures (1).

As one comes to know that Rām alone exists, one will not opine that there exists a difference between oneself and others (2).

One shall discern that in all bodies there is a single self, that Rām is the lover of our lives (3).

Dādū [says], the relationship with Rām alone is true, such is [my] bhāva, o my brother (4) ²⁹.

So *bhāva* is particularly that mental disposition which implies the awareness of the unity of the self, that is, of the *advaya*. This is evidently an interpretation of *bhāva* which is identical with what the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* uses to call *madbhāva*, the *bhāva* relying on Kṛṣṇa alone (Kṛṣṇa indicated by *mad-* in Kṛṣṇa's sermons). A person endowed with this kind of *bhāva* is described as thinking of « the *ātman* as one with Me Who I am without a difference » ³⁰. That *bhāva* is also said to transcend the *bhāvas* which are those related to the three basic qualities, that is, the

27a. The translation is Orr's, *op. cit.*, 125-26. The original text, as it is given in Caturvedi's edition, *op. cit.*, 497, except for the first line where I have left out the initial word *vāvāṇi* given by the editor, runs, *ihī vidhi āratī rāma kī kijai, ātama aṇtari bāranāṇi lījai. (ṭeka) tana mana caṇḍana prema kī mālā, anahada ghaṇṭā dīna dayālā* (1). *gyāna kā dīpaka pavana kī vātī, deva niraṇjana pācauṇ pātī* (2). *ānaṇḍa maṇḍala bhāva kī sevā, manasā maṇḍira ātama deva* (3). *bhagatī niraṇtara mainī balihārī, dādū na jānai seva tumhārī* (4) (Pada 26, 1).

28. Pada 8, 32, 3: *bhāva bhagatī karauṇ prīti sauṇ, prema rasa pijai*.

29. Pada 15, 14: *aisaiṇ bābā rāma ramījai, ātama sauṇ aṇtara nahīṇ kijai. (ṭeka) jaisaiṇ ātama āpā leṣai, jīva jaṇta aisaiṇ deṣai* (1). *eka rāma aisaiṇ kari jaṇṇai, āpā para aṇtara nahīṇ āṇṇai* (2). *saba ghaṭī ātama eka bicārai, rāma sanehī prāṇa hamārāi* (3). *dādū sāci rāma sagāi, aisā bhāva hamārāi bhāi* (4).

30. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 18, 21: ...*madbhāvavimalāsayaḥ, ātmānaṃ cintayed ekam abhedena mayā muniḥ*.

tāmasa, *rājasa*, and *sāttvika bhāvas*. The *madbhāva* is the result of the « discipline of *bhakti* »³¹.

Sundar does not give an explicit definition of the *bhāva* or the various kinds of *bhāva* he is talking of in JS 2. He has, however, written two full chapters of *savaiyā*-stanzas and of *sākhīs* on the theme of *bhāva*³². Both chapters are called *apane bhāva kau aṅga*, « chapter on one's own *bhāva* ». The phrase *bhāva apanau* is also used in JS 2, 17a. According to the two *bhāva*-chapters of Sundar, *bhāva* bears all the distinctive marks we are used to. *Bhāva* is both the threefold *guṇamaya-bhāva*³³ and the *bhāva* that transcends the *guṇa*-bound *bhāvas*. *Bhāva* as related to the *guṇas* comprehends the gamut of psychic conditions, empirical events and reactions to these:

By one's own bhāva the sun is visible, by one's own bhāva does the moon shine,

By one's own bhāva innumerable stars, by one's own bhāva the lightning.

By one's own bhāva there is light and splendour, by one's own bhāva does the lustre shine,

*As having that particular quality that is in accordance with his scope of comprehension it will be shown to him, [says] Sundar*³⁴.

It is also described as what would be the *tāmasa bhāva* proper:

Coming to the well the lion saw his shadow,

*Sundar [says], he thought that there was another lion in it, got drowned and died in it*³⁵.

Bhāva is the governing principle instrumental for enlightenment, counterbalanced with failing:

If by one's own bhāva there is detachedness, one weeps with love by one's own bhāva,

By one's own bhāva has one met [Him] and does one comprehend,... does one see [Him] within,

By one's own bhāva does one always keep awake,... does one sleep in ecstasy,

Sundar, like one's own bhāva is oneself in each state.

31. *Ibid.*, XI, 25, 32: *yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇā jīvena cittajāḥ, bhaktiyogena manniṣṭho madbhāvāya prapadyate.*

32. *Savaiyās*, chapter 23, pp. 573-78, and *sākhīs*, chapter 22, pp. 768-70, in the edition of H. N. Śarma, for which see note 5.

33. As it is called, for example, in *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 18, 31: *sarve guṇamayā bhāvāḥ.*

34. *Savaiyā* 23, 8: *āpunai bhāva teṃ sūra sau dīsata āpunai bhāva teṃ caṇḍra sau bhāsai, āpunai bhāva teṃ tāra ananṭa ju āpune bhāva teṃ vidyulatā sai / āpunai bhāva teṃ nūra hai teja hai āpune bhāva teṃ joti prakāsai, taisau hi tāhi diṣāvata suṇḍara jaisau hi hota hai jāhi kau āsai.*

35. *Sākhī* 22, 7: *siṃha kūpa pari āi kaiṃ deṣi apani chāṃhiṃ / suṇḍara jānyau dūsarau buḍi muvau tā māṃhiṃ.*

*By one's own bhāva has one fallen into error,... does one feel pride
at one's physical shape,
By one's own bhāva there is extreme fickleness,... is the intellect
made peaceful,
By one's own bhāva does one become forgetful of the self,... does one
become a knower of the self,
Sundar, exactly as one's bhāva is is man* ³⁶.

Finally, *bhāva* accounts for the attitude the devotee takes in worship:
*Sundar, by one's own bhāva does the idol drink the milk,
Having comprehended the Lord by means of Truth Nāmā's heart has
become pure* ³⁷.

*Sundar, by one's own bhāva is the form [of God] four-armed,
If he sees Him as He is properly, then He has really no form.*

Sundar, by making *arcana* an interior mode of worship, subsumes *saguṇa* worship under *nirguṇa* worship. The *saguṇa bhāva* which makes the devotee revere the visible idol is transformed to become consonant with the *nirguṇa bhāva*, the highest *bhāva* as illustrated in the last-quoted couplet. By such a procedure Sundar both rejects and accepts the *saguṇa* position. This is no unprecedented procedure. It is styled on the old model that also prevails in parts of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. According to these, internal worship befits the pious one and especially the *yogīs* who fix their minds on Kṛṣṇa ³⁸. These persons attain Kṛṣṇa mainly by being *mayyanuraktacetas* ³⁹, that is through *bhaktiyoga* ⁴⁰ and by withdrawing from mundane objects and, moreover, by applying yogic techniques. In the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* I, 2, 33 ⁴¹, Rūpa Gosvāmī discusses *sevādhyānam*, « meditation on service », saying that this form of meditation is to be performed as described in « some other *Purāṇa* » where, he says, it is stated how those « who incessantly served Hari by mental worship attained Him personally (*sākṣāt*), Him Who [resides] beyond and who is unattainable through speech and mind » ⁴². Jīva Go-

36. Savaiyā 23, 11-12: *āpune bhāva teṃ hoi udāsa ju āpune bhāva teṃ prema saṃ rovai, āpune bhāva milyau puni jānata āpune bhāva teṃ aṃtara jovai / āpune bhāva rahai nita jāgata āpune bhāva samādhi maiṃ sovai, suṃdara jaisau i bhāva hai āpunau taisau i āpu tahāṃ tahāṃ hovai* (11). *āpune bhāva teṃ bhuli paryau bhrama deha svarūpa bhayau abhimānī, āpune bhāva teṃ caṃcalatā ati āpune bhāva teṃ buddhi thirānī / āpune bhāva teṃ āpa bisārata āpune bhāva teṃ ātamajñānī, suṃdara jaisau hi bhāva hai āpunau taisau hi hoi gāyau yaha prānī* (12).

37. Sākhī 22, 22-23: *suṃdara apāne bhāva teṃ mūrata piyau duddha/ṭhākura jānyaṃ satya kari nāṃmāṃ kau ura suddha* (22). *suṃdara apāne bhāva teṃ rūpa caturbhujā hoi / yā kauṃ aisaū dṛṣai vā kai rūpa na koi* (23).

38. *Int. al. ibid.*, XI, 14-15.

39. *Ibid.*, XI, 14, 17.

40. *Ibid.*, XI, 14, 25.

41. I am quoting from the edition by Gosvāmī Dāmodar Śāstrī, Kāśī, V.S. 1988: *dhyānaṃ rūpaṅakṛīḍāsevādeḥ suṣṭhu cintanam / dāsyam karmārpaṇam kain-karyyam api sarvathā*.

42. *Ibid.*: *yathā purāṇāntare... pare vānmanasāgamyam taṃ sākṣāt pratipedire*.

svāmī comments on this passage saying that it derives from the *Brahmaivaivartapurāṇa*⁴³ where it is said that a poor brahmin, unable to afford the sacrificial matter, served Viṣṇu mentally, doing so on hearing superior brahmins talk about this way of service (*vipreन्द्रāṇām sadasi vaiṣṇavān dharmān śuśrāva*). So intensely did he serve the Lord that he even burnt his finger while dipping it into the mind-created sacrificial potion contained in the mind-created golden pot!

The quotation given by Jīva Gosvāmī suggests that *sevādhyānam* is an orthodoxly recognized mode of worship which, in fact, it is. It is a form of the *mānasī pūjā* which in its turn represents the continuation of the orthodox idea of the *mānasa agnihotra* put forth in the *Brāhmaṇas*. In the *mānasa agnihotra* the *yajamāna's śraddhā* takes the place of the sacrificial matter, *havya*, otherwise prescribed for the *agnihotra*^{43a}. So Sundar's procedure can claim orthodox recognition. Making use of the constant *nirguṇa-saṅga* dichotomy in the Vaiṣṇava discussions such as those in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* for example, he shifts the weight just a bit further to the side of the interior *bhāva-bhakti*. *Saṅga-bhakti* thus loses ground and *nirguṇa-bhakti* or *bhāva-arcana* gains preponderance. But both sides of the balance do count. The dimensions of Sundar's *bhāva-bhakti* are still determined by its relation with its *saṅga* counterpart.

The devotee's *bhāva* as practised during the first lowest phase of *bhakti* has not yet attained that pure form which is only reached at the stage of *parābhakti*. This will be discussed presently.

After *arcana* Sundar proceeds to describe *stuti*⁴⁴, illustrated by an *aṣṭaka* highly popular to this day but left unquoted here, and goes on to deal with *vandana* in its interior and exterior form (JS 2, 31):

Homage is of two kinds, I will tell you these, disciple; listen!

With one's own body one shall imitate a stick, as if the body had been punished.

And this way, through one's mind, inside one's body, one shall prostrate oneself at the Lord's feet.

*He who follows these two methods, performs the devotion of homage*⁴⁵.

43. *Ibid.*, ad I, 2, 33. I could not verify the quotation.

43a. Cf. *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* 25, 3: *ahaṁ śraddhāṁ juhomi*. See also KANA MITRA, *Cultic acts in Hinduism*, in « Offenbarung als Heilserfahrung im Christentum, Hinduismus und Buddhismus », ed. Walter Stolz and Shizutero Ueda, Freiburg, 1982: 127-144, especially 135-138. Among the items of the *mānasī pūjā* is, for example, also the *mānasa snāna* mentioned in the *Yogayājñavalkya*, a fairly early Hāthayoga treatise, where it is said *mānasaṁ* (scil. *snānaṁ*) *viśrucintanam*; cf. P. V. KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, 1, Poona, 1974: 668, note 1589.

44. JS 2, 22-30.

45. *bandana doi prakāra kahaṁ śiṣa saṁbhaliyaṁ daṇḍa samāna karai tana saṁ tana daṇḍa diyaṁ / tyaṁ mana saṁ tana madhya prabhu kara pāi parai, yā bidhi doi prakāra su bandana bhakti karai.*

Dāsyatva, sakhyatva, and ātmanivedanā follow in JS 2, 32-34:

If he lives in constant awe, and, joining his palms in humbleness, speaks:

« What the Lord has said to me, this I will take to be an order », — Not for a single moment will the faithful wife be disobedient to her husband's orders! —

O disciple, consider this the devotion that is servanthood.

Listen, disciple, about the friendship I will tell you: Hari is always with the soul.

He will not leave it for a single moment, no matter whence or whither the soul may drift.

Now, having roamed about, in Hari take your well-being! He who is a friend shall firmly cling to this bhāva.

In this way, Sundar, the friend will not forsake his friend. The Veda calls this manner of devotion friendship.

First he surrenders his mind, secondly his body,

Thirdly he surrenders his wealth, fourthly his house.

House, wife, wealth, servants,

Horses and elephants, all he shall relinquish, thus it is said,

Further on: « My mind is Yours, Yours, O Lord, my body! »

Disciple, listen to this speech, this is self-sacrifice⁴⁶.

As implied in the function of the *sādhana bhakti*, the *bhāva* during this first state of *bhakti* is directed to some divine object to be made obeisance to, to some task to be fulfilled, even if all this happens in an interior fashion. This was evident when Sundar described *arcana*, and this is very evident in the case of *dāsyatva*, too. *Dāsyatva* is a well defined *bhāva* which will occur once again on the highest level of perfection⁴⁷. On the lowest level the devotee exhibits an attitude of servanthood and constant awe, he behaves like the *pativrata*, the devoted wife. Awe is certainly no quality indicative of highest perfection. If the unity of the soul together with the Absolute prevails, there can hardly exist awe, *bhaya*, which would be incompatible with *nirbhaya*, another symbol of the state of blissful unity. From what follows with regard to *dāsyatva* it will become evident that that tinge of imperfection will disap-

46. *nitya bhaya sauṃ rahai hasta joreṃ kahai, kahā prabhu mohi ājñā su hoī / palaka patibratā pati bacana khaṇḍai nahīṃ, bhakti dāsyatva śiṣa jāṃni soi (32). suni śiṣya sakhāpana tohi kahaṃ hari ātama kai nita saṃga rahai, palu chāḍata nahīṃ samīpa sadā jitaḥīṃ jita kau yaha jīva bahai / aba tūṃ phiri kai hari sauṃ hita rāsahi hoī sakhā dṛḍha bhāva gahāi, ima suṃdara mitra na mitra tajai yaha bhakti sakhāpana bheda kahai (33). prathama samarpana mana karai dutiya samarpana deha, tritiya samarpana dhana karai catuṣ samarpana geha / geha dārā dhanam dāsa dāsī janāṃ, bāja hāthī ganāṃ sarva dai yaṃṃ bhanaṃ / aura je me manāṃ hai prabhu te tanāṃ, śiṣya vāṃṃ sunāṃ ātamā arpanam (34).*

47. JS 2, 48 ff., quoted further below.

pear on the highest stage of *bhāva-bhakti*. The imperfection consists, we may infer, in the *bhāva* still being founded on the *guṇas*.

Sundar goes on to describe the middle stage of *bhakti* called *prema-lakṣaṇā*⁴⁸. The characteristics of *premabhakti* are essentially the same as those mentioned several times in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*⁴⁹ and therefore need not be repeated here. To sum up, *premabhakti* is manifest in physically being beyond oneself, incapable of checking the emotions arising from the bliss of love of Hari. It is love which no longer longs for the fruit of *bhakti* as would be the case on the lowest stage of devotion. *Prema* is the overwhelming love which the *bhakta*, disinterested and at peace, just cannot help expressing. *Premabhakti* takes away all defilement from the *bhakta*, but few devotees are able to attain it (JS 2, 45):

*The devotion of prema I have expounded, few people understand it.
How can defilement adhere to the heart of a person in whose body
such devotion dwells*⁵⁰?

This verse seems to convey the idea that the devotee has attained a perfect *sāttvika* state. This state of purity is also described in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* after the enumeration of the physical symptoms of ecstasy. It says that the *ātman* casts off all the ties of *karman* and that by the discipline of *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* one lovingly adores God, and that the purer the soul becomes the closer does one see the subtle reality as if some miraculous healing-unguent had been applied to one's eyes. In consequence of all this, the *bhakta* is said to become absorbed in *Kṛṣṇa*. The devotee's mind is *madbhāva-bhāvitam*, that is, one in which the *Kṛṣṇa-bhāva* has been made manifest⁵¹. According to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* a spiritual process is envisaged here leading from *guṇa-bhāva* to *madbhāva* (*mad-* indicating *Kṛṣṇa*). However no threefold distinction is made. That seems to have been elaborated fully by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, although preliminary categories appear in Nārada's and Śaṅḍilya's *Bhaktisūtras*. With Rūpa Gosvāmī, the middle state of *bhakti*, called *bhāva-bhakti*, is said to be characterized by the purest *sattva*-quality⁵², and Rupa emphasizes also that only very few devotees can attain it⁵³. So too does Sundar. Admittedly, all these points of similarity do not allow us to claim an influence exerted by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava writings on Sundar, at least not a direct influence. But, I think, they

48. JS 2, 36-46.

49. See for example *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 3, 32, or XI, 14, 23-24.

50. *prema bhakti yaha maiṁ kahī, jānaiṁ biralā koi / hṛdaya kaluṣatā kyaumṛ rahai, jā ghaṭa aiśi hoi.*

51. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* XI, 14, 25-28.

52. *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* I, 3, 1: *śuddhasattvaviśeṣātmā premasūryayāmśusāmya-bhāk / rucibhiś cittaṁ āśṛyākṛd asau bhāva ucyate.*

53. *Ibid.*, I, 3, 5: *ādyaś tu prāyikaś tatra dvitīyo viralodayaḥ.* « First » and « second » refer to the *bhāva* on the part of *Kṛṣṇa* and on the part of his devotees.

enable us to assume that the categories of *bhakti* so stringently formulated by the Caitanya followers moulded the theological concepts later authors propounded. One just cannot help thinking of the Gauḍīyas when going through Sundar's *bhakti*-treatise.

The highest stage of *bhakti*, called the *parābhakti*⁵⁴, is treated in JS 2, 47 ff. It is said to be characterized by the mystical experience of luminosity (JS 2, 48-54):

*Never will he be cast off by Hari, he stays with Him eternally.
There, always facing Him, the servant stands, joining his palms in humbleness.*

Not for a single moment will there be a gap between them, his eyes will be wide open[, fixed on Him].

This is the experience of the splendour of supreme devotion; listen, disciple, the Real Guru tells [about it]! (48)

The servant merges with the One he serves, he drinks the Liquor, they both are not different and they are different forever.

As with a watery substance kept in water, the substance can by no means be isolated from the water,

As in the eye the pupil and the eye are one, but, what is by no means different, this is displayed by them as different,

Thus, says Sundar, the servant whose bhāva is always this supreme devotion, dwells in the Supreme Self. (49)

*Without ears he hears the sound, without eyes he sees the form,
Without a tongue he utters praise and works it out in many ways.*

*He dances without feet, he beats the rhythm without hands,
The union obtained without a body creates great bliss.*

There, without head he bows in salutation to the One he serves, the servant stands full of the [servant's] bhāva.

If with the Supreme Self the self is merging, Sundar calls this the supreme devotion. (50)

Gone to Him he serves, the servant joins Him thus:

*He is one with Him, but will not mix with Him in spite of being one.
He will not give up his bhāva of a servant.*

This is the supreme devotion. Through fortune's grace one may acquire it. (51)

*He merges with Him in a single body,
They are not different bodies.*

Thus he sports,

And follows the bhāva of a servant. (52)

54. *Parābhakti* is, of course, an old term, for which cf. *Bhagavadgītā* 18, 54 and 68. Synonymous with *paramā bhakti*; it is a term proper to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and also to the two *bhakti*-treatises of Nārada and Śaṇḍilya.

Like a mirage in the heat
 Looking mixed with it and [still] distinct,
 Exactly in this way, Lord and servant are a single One,
 Happily [One] sports; in this consists the knowledge of [what]
 « different » [means]. (53)

Hari's servant sports in Hari,
 Never will he be separated from Hari.
 As Hari is Eternal, so is Hari's servant.
 For the purpose of drinking the Liquor the bhāva is distinct. (54)⁵⁵

It is a functional dualism combined with monism that is advocated for here. The merging of God and the soul is conceived as the rise of splendour, a symbol current since the Upaniṣads. This means that only the light of the *ātman* shines forth and that all *upādhis* have vanished. The merging in identity is expressed in JS 2, 49a and also in JS 2, 50. The last-mentioned passage implies the idea that the gross body is annihilated (*aṅga binā mili saṅga*)⁵⁶. The subsequent verses all dwell on the same state of non-difference. This is contrasted with the persistent state of difference illustrated in stanzas 49 ff.

The analogical proofs repeated in 49bc are well-known from the variously shaded *bhedābheda* discussions. As mentioned in the beginning, Sundar, in the fifth and final chapter of the *Jñānsamudra* teaches *advaita* in a strict monistic sense. But this last chapter is concerned with ontology and with *mukti*. This is, however, not the case in the presently treated second chapter, and this explains the *bhedābheda* position Sundar takes here. Highest *bhakti*, *per definitionem*, does not aim at *mukti*. It cannot do so, because all aims one might pursue antagonize pure *bhakti*. Pursual of aims bears the tinge of the *guṇa-bhāvas*, no matter how noble the aim be. This is taught in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*⁵⁷ and

55. *bikṣepa kabahuṃ na hoi hari saum nikaṭavartti nitya him, taham sadā sana-mukha rahai āgai hātha jauḍai bhr̥tya him / palu yeka kabahuṃ na hoi am̐tara ṭagaṭaḡi lāḡi rahai, yaha parā bhakti prakāśa paricaya śiṣya suni sadguru kahai* (48). *sevaka sevya milyau rasa pīvata bhinna nahim aru bhinna sadā him, jyaum jala bica dharyau jala piṇḍa su piṇḍa ru nira jude kachu nāmhīm / jyaum dṛga maiṃ putari dṛga yeka nahīm kachu bhinna su bhinna diṣāmhīm, suṃdara sevaka bhāva sadā yaha bhakti parā paramātama māmhīm* (49). *śravana binā dhuni sunaya nainā bina rūpa nihārāya, rasana binā uccaraya praśaṃsā bahu vistārāya / nr̥tya carana binu karaya hasta binu tāla bajāvai, aṅga binā mili saṅga bahuta ānaṃḍa baṛhāvai / bina sīsa navai taham sevya kaum sevaka bhāva liyeṃ rahai, mili paramātama saum ātamā parābhakti suṃdara kahai* (50). *sevya kaum jāi kai dāsa aisaiṃ milai, yeka so hoi maiṃ yeka hvai nā bhilai / āpanaum bhāva dāsatya chārāi nahīm, sā parā-bhakti hai bhāgya pāvai kahīm* (51). *milai yeka saṅga, nahīm bhinna aṅgā / karai yaum vilāsā, dharai bhāva dāsā* (52). *jyaum mṛgatṛṣṇām dhūpa māmjhāri, yekameka aru dīsata nyāri / tyaum hī svāmī sevaka yeka, sukha bilasai yaha bhīma bibekā* (53). *hari maiṃ haridāsa bilāsa karai, hari saum kabahū nā bichoha parai / hari akṣaya tyaum haridāsa sadā, rasa pīvana kaum yaha bhāva judā* (54).

56. Its locus classicus is *Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* IV, 3, 23-31.

57. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* IX, 4, 67: *matsevayā pratītam ca śālokyādicatuṣṭayam / necchanti sevayā pūrnāḥ kuto 'nyat kālavidrutam*.

repeated in the first programmatic stanza of the *maṅgalācarāṇa* of the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*⁵⁸. The difference-cum-non-difference attitude is a functional one related to *bhāva*, that is, the highest state of *bhāva*. It is a *dāsyatvabhāva* again, but this time of the *guṇātīta* « quality » (if I may use such a paradoxical expression here). The servant's humbleness, the invariable ingredient of *bhakti*, is retained, but all other qualities of servanthood are destroyed (thus *bhāyā*, « awe », for which see JS 2, 32). Nothing except splendour exists⁵⁹. Through *bhāva* alone the servant sports in union with Hari and drinks *rasa*, Liquor, that is, enjoys the union with God⁶⁰. The distinction between God and soul is one of *bhāva*. That *bhāva* assumes a luminosity consubstantial with the Absolute and the devotee (JS 2, 55):

Where the Lord is Splendour, there the servant is Splendour, too.

.....

*Splendour also is Sundar, Splendour the bhāva,
He who is Splendour acquires the devotion that is Splendour*⁶¹.

Such a consubstantiality with the Absolute can only prevail because the *bhāva* is beyond the *upādhis*. The *bhāva* is a functional aspect of the Absolute which provides for the awareness of the bliss of *bhakti*. In this respect, Sundar's *bhāva* and *rasa* look like replicas of the Gauḍīya terms, that is *bhāva*, « the worshipful attitude that the *bhakta* assumes toward Kṛṣṇa » which is transformed into *rasa*, « the experience of pure bliss of the love relationship between the two »⁶². One of the differences prevailing is, however, that with Sundar not the *mādhuryabhāva* but the *dāsyatvabhāva* ranks foremost or rather assumes a unique position.

To conclude, we may reiterate what was said at the outset concerning the sixteenth and seventeenth century Sant leaning toward orthodox Vaiṣṇavism. Regarding *bhakti*, Sundar's approach rests throughout on orthodox tenets. Parenthetically it may be noted that not a single word has been said in this paper with respect to Sundar's indebtedness to Haṭhayoga about which he has produced many treatises. Sundar is not, at least not in an outspoken apologetic manner, concerned with the struggle for securing social respectability for his sect. On the strength

58. *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* I, 1, 4: *bhaktirasāmṛtasindhau carataḥ paribhūtakālajā-labhiyaḥ / bhaktamakarāṇaśīlitamuktinadikān namasyāmi*.

59. JS 2, 47cd: *parā bhakti tau saum kahaum, jā tem hoi prakāsa*. « Supreme devotion I will explain to you by which the splendour shall break forth ». I have retained the literal meaning of *prakāsa* rather than translating the word by « enlightenment ». Both meanings are, in fact, identical, for the enlightenment consisting in the awareness of the unity of God together with the soul is described throughout as the rise of luminosity.

60. JS 2, 53c and 54c.

61. JS 2, 55: *tejomaya svāṇmī tahaṇ sevaka hū tejomaya, ... tejomaya suṁdara hū bhāva puni tejomaya, tejomaya bhakti kaum tejomaya pāvā*.

62. E. DIMOCK, *Doctrine and practice among the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal*, in « Krishna: myths, rites, and attitudes », ed. M. Singer, Honolulu, 1966: 49.

of theological reasons he accepts the *saguna* elements of Vaiṣṇava worship and subsumes them to his *nirguna* position. In spite of complying with the postulate of being non-iconic and interior, and in spite of being re-evaluated in the Sant way, the *saguna* substratum is present and its influence continues to permeate the history of the sect.

I think that, apart from all socio-religious motives he may have had, Sundar's approach is genuinely theological and appears to be an attempt to come to terms with a pastorally relevant problem: behind all discussion of *bhakti* and *bhāva* there lies the fundamental question of how the *nirguna* can become the subject of *anubhava*, i.e. religious experience. Sundar, like many other advocates of *nirguna* before him, faces the perennial dilemma that the *nirguna* reality he pleads for will necessarily succumb to and become some sort of, *saguna bhakti* when making its descent into words and organized forms of worship.